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CULTURE SHOCK.

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IN A PANEL, GEORGE BRAGLE AND NATHAN GOULD STRESS TEACHER PREPARATION TO COPE WITH THE THREATENING IMPACT OF CULTURE OR REALITY SHOCK. THEY RECOMMEND MODIFYING THE ATTITUDES OF TEACHERS BY ALTERING THEIR PERCEPTIONS, PROVIDING THEM WITH DIRECT EXPERIENCE WITH THE SOCIOCULTURAL MILIEU OF GHETTO SCHOOLS, AND REQUIRING THEM TO TAKE COURSES IN THE SOCIAL SCIENCES. DONALD LETTIS ACCOUNTS FOR WHITE RESISTANCE TO INTEGRATION AS A "FEAR OF AN ALIEN CULTURE," WHICH MIDDLE-CLASS TEACHERS OF LOWER-CLASS PUPILS COULD SURMOUNT BY CASUAL, INFORMAL CONTACTS TO ESTABLISH THE INTERCOMMUNICATION WHICH WOULD LEAD TO MORE EFFECTIVE TEACHING AND LEARNING. GUIDED PRESERVICE EXPERIENCES ARE SUGGESTED BY MIRIAM URDANG AS MEANS TO ENABLE TEACHER TRAINEES TO CONFRONT THEIR FEELINGS TOWARD DISADVANTAGED GROUPS. SHE DESCRIBES SEVERAL SUCH EFFORTS AND OFFERS SOME GUIDELINES. GERALD WEINSTEIN, IN SUMMARIZING THE PRESENTATIONS, NOTES THAT CULTURE SHOCK WAS DISCUSSED MAINLY FROM THE TEACHER'S POINT OF VIEW. HE SUGGESTS THAT THE TERM REALITY SHOCK IS MORE ACCURATE THAN CULTURE SHOCK AND THAT IT SHOULD BE RECOGNIZED THAT PUPILS TOO EXPERIENCE THIS PHENOMENON. (NH)

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CULTURE SHOCK

Discussants:

DR. H. WARREN BUTTON

DR. ABRAHAM J. TANNENBAUM

Mr. Gerald Weinstein

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SUMMARY Mr. Bragle in his paper said that the disadvantaged spotlight the failures of the past for all. Culture shock might be defined as feelings of anxiety and being threatened which leads to selective perception of the person in which he begins to see only the threat. He then begins to defend against the threat with whatever existing stance he may have at the time. The prescription for lessening the shock seems to lie in developing basically creative people; ego-development for the teacher. This may be reached in two ways: through opportunities for self-discovery, through work on valuing. This must take place in a situation that provides a climate for change, that allows feedback, and that structures a systematic look at values.

The second speaker, Dr. Gould, an anthropologist, noted that culture shock is a reaction to being immersed in a totally different way of life. But, there is danger of applying "culture shock" to the disadvantaged because the term emphasizes cultural differences. Dr. Gould said he is not sure that such a concept applies to teachers either. It may be better to discuss "reality shock" instead. Reality shock of the school occurs because the formal and informal education has insulated many teachers from reality. There must be training in reality settings and not merely adjustment training. Anthropology and sociology, although limited, can provide necessary intellectual tools for confronting reality. Supervised experiences in the reality setting to learn directly how to deal with it leads to two major prescriptions: direct experience in training in urban schools, direct experience in training in non-school environment. The nature and quality of the supervision is most crucial.

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Mr. Lettis pointed out that culture shock can be reduced through informal experiences, basically, through an informal summer program that involves more than an exchange between middle-class and lower-class, but rather a direct confrontation with whose values rule. Courses dealing with minority cultures are no solution. Part of student teaching in urban schools is also a failure since the texts don't equip the student teacher and too frequently make invidious comparisons between disadvantaged and other learners. Student teachers may learn to survive but gain no real understanding. The nature of the exposure is crucial.

Dr. Urdang observed that teachers have not experienced culture shock at the pre-service level. Having no rational structures for dealing with the shock when it does occur, they react emotionally [illegible] attitudes. What is needed is to have guided live experiences incorporated into existing formal training. Hunter College attempts to provide critical insights into the background of the learner through trips, walking tours, and field work with small groups of pupils in school settings. Intimate contact is also provided when the student teacher is placed with other inexperienced teachers and supervision for both is provided. Training in community field work collecting census data from the community as well as in community service are utilized in order to have the trainee become community oriented.

Culture shock is the major cause of the failure of most teachers. Having student teachers work with disadvantaged children under intensive supervision, affording them assistance in examining their own attitudes and creating an environment for them to express feelings, should help to change behavior. Opportunities should also be afforded inservice teachers to continue their professional growth and to better resolve their feelings about the children they are teaching. There should be school and college cooperation, with evaluation procedures an integral part of each program.

Dr. Button indicated that student teaching is obviously inadequate. We're still not sure what "culture shock" means. We've talked about many things, developed new cliches but relatively few programs have been established to prepare teachers to work in inner city schools. Directions are unclear and yet we know that we can't stay still.

Dr. Tannenbaum stated that lumping the disadvantaged together in terms of culture shock may be very harmful. There is the possibility of many slum subcultures. Culture shock as the main reason for teacher disengagement should be studied. Formal training programs have failed. A variety of types of teacher trainee exposures to slum culture should be investigated. Change has to be internal. The thought that integration *per se* will reduce intergroup tensions may be amiss. Communication skills between teachers and pupils have to be improved: They must learn each other's language. Is it possible to reduce "culture shock" and at the same time maintain cultural plurality? What needs to be done on teaching main stream values? There's a great deal of time spent in understanding the receiver, the learner, and neglecting the study of the transmitter. There is no comprehensive system of teaching alternatives.

REACTION It wasn't possible in the limited amount of time for any of the panel members to explore in any great depth the problem of culture shock. Most of the presenters and discussants viewed culture shock from the perspective of the teacher, that it was the teacher who had to be helped, somehow, to bridge the culture gap. I think the most important point raised was that the term culture shock might be a poor term and that we substitute rather "reality shock" for teachers. I suppose what was most sorely lacking was the whole question of the "culture shock" of **pupils going from their respective neighborhoods and culture milieus to the schools and being exposed to the instructional program as an element of culture shock.** It seems to me that until the focus is on the shock of the pupils coming into a school which is basically not geared to a reality interpretation, all efforts geared at either reality training for teachers or culture shock or what have you, is after the fact. **For the way schools are presently established, neither the pupil nor the teacher is expected to deal with any tasks regarding reality and this seems to be the most gross oversight in terms of the whole question.**

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CONCERN FOR ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOR

CULTURE SHOCK

Professor George W. Bragle

Much of the attention to educational issues in the past few years has been the re-discovery of old issues. We have now discovered the terms "culture shock" or "reality shock." However, experienced teachers have been telling us for years that they just can't understand their students. They remind us that when they began teaching their students worked harder, respected their elders, loved learning. Through the work of Coleman, Havighurst, and others we became aware, in the 1950's, of the existence of the various sub-cultures in the school society: the fun, academic, and delinquent sub-cultures. The point here is two-fold: the problem is not new in kind, and we have not been able to solve the problem even when it was less serious. It has been the work among the disadvantaged that has put the spotlight of attention on our worst deficiencies.

Effects of Anxiety and Fear

There is no denying that the situation facing teachers in the schools of the inner city, or of deprived neighborhoods, is the worst we have had to face because the effect produced on the teacher is communicated to the students. The teacher moves in a world that is not his own, where his values, attitudes, mores no longer apply. The impact of this experience on the individual varies with the individual, but it leaves its mark. The impact is similar to that which occurs in most people at the time of the diagnosis of a major illness. The awareness of the threat to physical well-being begins as diffuse anxiety. This state is replaced by a more personalized concept developed in accordance with the individual's personality. In the normal person, with the passage of time and increased emotional distance from the original episode, a relatively successful adaptation in the patient's psychic economy takes place. He learns to live with his illness and achieves some degree of acceptance. At the beginning, however, this acceptance is quite difficult and anxiety provoking.

When the individual feels threatened two interesting things happen to his ability to perceive. One of these is an effect which psychologists call "tunnel vision." The field of vision becomes narrowed so that the individual perceives only the object which he regards as a threat. All else in the environment is ignored. The second effect makes the individual defend his existing position. The more threatened the person is, the more he defends his existing position.

These two effects are antithetical to everything we are seeking in teacher education. We do not want the student's perceptions narrowed; on the contrary, we want them widened. We do not want the person to defend existing positions; we want him to change to something more effective. Thus, we have instituted various programs to lessen the anxiety and fear resulting from culture shock. We have devised various types of pre-service laboratory experiences; we have insisted on course work in urban sociology and cultural anthropology; we have practiced certain successful teaching strategies. What we have not done is to remind ourselves of Skinner's remark that: "In spite of discouraging evidence to the contrary, it is still supposed that if you tell a student something, he then knows it." Our basic function in the area of teacher attitudes should be to produce teachers who are ready and able to get outside of their own familiar patterns of perceiving and acting and to confront aspects of the world they did not know existed.

Prof. Bragle is Assistant Professor of Education at The College of Saint Rose.

Self Discovery as a Key Toward Creativity

Granting these delineations of the problem, the next step is to suggest some method to solve the problem. I would recommend that we consider the position taken by Arthur Combs and fostered by ASCD. This approach calls for the production of creative persons, capable of shifting and changing to meet the demands presented to them. It involves a situation that is free from threat to the individual.

Basically, this view regards an understanding of the individual's perceptual world in order to understand his behavior. To change another person's behavior involves modifying his perceptions. When he sees things differently, he will behave differently. This view emphasizes the importance of the self-concept of the learner. In speaking of the education of the disadvantaged, we emphasize the importance of developing a self-concept in the student. Yet, we often forget or ignore the same thing in the teacher. Teachers, too, are affected by the adequacy of their self-concept. The central element in the acquisition of a self-concept is self-discovery. Here we can look to the findings in the creativity studies and to the findings in the curricular areas of discovery and inquiry methods.

At the beginning I mentioned that the ultimate effect of the anxiety produced by the cultural shock will be in accordance with the individual's personality and that at best he will only be able to learn to live with the illness. This is generally what we have been doing. We have been helping the individual to adjust to the new world in which he will work. When he adjusts he is on the defensive. There is still the belief that there is a better world out there in the suburbs. There is still the belief that these students are *dis-* or *de-*, disadvantaged, or deprived.

Proposed Guidelines

Effecting change in individuals is possible and there are some guidelines for us to follow. Combs, Rogers, Raths, and others suggest that consideration must be given to three areas: setting up a climate suitable for change, providing for the acquisition of feedback of behavior, and providing for a systematic clarification of values.

We need to remind ourselves that in teachers, as well as in the pupils they serve, learning is an individual matter. How something is learned is determined primarily by the internal structure of needs, perceptions, readiness, motivations, etc. of the individual—not by the external conditions desiring change. More and better verbalized knowledge about sociology, more specific pre-service laboratory experience will not, *per se*, result in more effective teachers of the disadvantaged.

CONCERN FOR ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOR

CULTURE SHOCK

Dr. Nathan Gould

Culture shock, an experience individuals have upon being immersed in an alien culture, is characterized by a state of disturbance following upon the loss of the familiar that sustains the individual in everyday life. So disturbing and disorienting is the condition that it has been characterized as a mental illness by George M. Foster. However, the prognosis is favorable if one has the capacity for coping with the realities of the new culture.

Application of the culture shock concept to the situation of the new teacher among the disadvantaged is suggested by (1) the fact that teachers frequently experience disturbance and serious problems of adjusting to teaching among the disadvantaged, and (2) the widely held belief that the major source of overall difficulty is the subcultural gulf that separates the middle-class teacher from her lower-class pupils. However, difficulties are involved in applying this idea to advance understanding of this situation and the problems it presents. For example, there has yet been little serious effort to analyze culture shock as a socio-psychological process; the concept at present is hardly more than a label for a complex, undifferentiated totality. Further, *culture shock* implicitly emphasizes *cultural* differences as *the* source of socio-psychological difficulties, and it is by no means certain that the problems the new teacher encounters derive exclusively from basic cultural or subcultural differences. It is thus more objective to speak of *reality shock* rather than culture shock, leaving open the question of generative sources of the process and concomitant adjustment problems.

As noted, teachers frequently find their first teaching experience among the disadvantaged to be traumatic. The problem has been discussed largely in relation to the "slum" or "ghetto" schools in our large cities, which typically are schools of minority group children. That these institutions present a traumatic, problematic experience for new teachers indicates that their formal preparation as well as other life experiences have kept them separated—indeed, insulated—from the realities of life that exist both in these schools and, more broadly, among the poor in the community. The teacher typically has not been adequately prepared through formal education or other experiences to meet and cope with the actual situations that confront her.

This suggests that a partial resolution of the problem can be effected through teacher education strategies that prepare students in direct ways for meeting these realities. This is not to imply that students should be taught only to "adjust", to accept all conditions they encounter. It is to suggest only that teacher education programs for the disadvantaged, whatever their other goals, should educate students to conditions of "real life" in the socio-cultural milieus in which they will teach.

Dr. Gould is Associate Professor of Anthropology and Education at the Ferkauf Graduate School of Yeshiva University.

The social sciences, especially sociology and cultural anthropology, can be used effectively toward this end, for they provide a substantial body of knowledge about actualities the novice will or should experience. They can be used effectively to cultivate a sympathetic understanding of life among the poor and the distinctive problems and needs of the disadvantaged child. Of primary significance, they can provide students with essential intellectual tools for understanding and coping with the socio-cultural milieu in which they find themselves. In this way, they can serve to attenuate the shock of reality, for part of the novice's adjustment difficulties stem from a lack of understanding of this milieu and its influences upon her.

Although this kind of course work is essential, it obviously is not adequate in itself as preparation for reality. One can learn to cope with life, including its traumas, only by living. Course work can supplement and complement, but cannot substitute for, experience in the actual situation. This suggests that the reality of teaching in the schools of the disadvantaged should be built into teacher education programs so that students have the opportunity to experience it and to learn to deal with the problems it presents directly as part of their formal preparation. Our experience in an education program of this kind in the Yeshiva University Project Beacon Program indicates that two general kinds of reality situations can be meaningfully built into formal preparation: (1) direct student experience in a responsible training role in schools of the disadvantaged, especially in urban "slum" or "ghetto" schools, and (2) direct student experience in responsible training roles in relations with disadvantaged children in their non-school environment. The latter type of experience would appear to be especially valuable as a means of inculcating in students a sympathetic understanding of their pupils, their learning problems and their needs.

This strategy also serves to incorporate reality shock into the formal education program. In this way, it allows for maximum use of the experience for educational purposes, i.e., for stimulating personal growth and professional development. In this connection, a disturbing meeting with life is not necessarily undesirable; it can provide a valuable learning experience. Whether or not it does may depend largely on the nature and quality of the support and guidance the individual receives during the experience, and one suspects that much of the difficulty experienced by new teachers is a result of deficiency in this latter area.

Finally, incorporating these reality situations into programs also allows for and should facilitate an integration of learning through the traditional type of formal course work with learning through direct experience.

CONCERN FOR ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOR

CULTURE SHOCK

Professor Donald R. Lettis

Boston teachers recently asked "combat pay" to teach in South End schools, yet Mrs. Hicks, of the Boston School Committee, voted against a proposal to tear down two of these schools and bus the pupils to white neighborhood schools. The current issue in the Needham School Committee elections is whether or not to place Negro children in their school system. Why the reluctance to confront these problems, the solution to which would help to alleviate tensions, equalize educational opportunities and create a way upward, out of the ghettos?

Confronting and Breaching Barriers

It is prompted by fear of an alien culture. The term "culture shock" has been used to describe the reaction upon confronting the barrier that exists between the position of the prestige-obsessed, over-privileged middle class and the denigrated poor. "Shock" has the proper connotation for this confrontation because it is more than a casual meeting of middle and lower classes, more than the exchange of alms from rich man to beggar, and more than the imposing of a will by an aristocracy on a peasantry. It is a violent impact between cultures with different values, goals, and languages. The collision is inevitable, because both exist in a common domain, both demand equal recognition, and both act from the same motivations.

Identifying this barrier has implications for any educational program. Success depends on this barrier being breached. Any program ignoring it risks neutralizing its effectiveness, as inadequate communications cause inhibitions, misunderstandings generate hostility, and unrealistic goals result in resistance.

To acknowledge a problem may offer an insight which aids in its solution. One obvious answer is to have students take courses dealing with minority cultures. These are frequently offered, yet they appear to be ineffective in lessening the "culture-shock." Some institutions insist that a part of the student-teaching experience be in a ghetto, or inner city, school. Even this does not significantly better prepare the future teacher for the job he eventually faces.

Ineffectual Approaches to Understanding and Insight

What is wrong with these approaches? They do not breach the barrier. College learning lacks meaning because it ill-equips the future teacher to deal with the disadvantaged. Not only inappropriate, such methods are apt to be invidiously comparative.

What of student teaching? Here apparently is contact with reality. But even if these student teachers are fortunate enough to survive, they will gain little understanding or insight. A classroom, especially for the inexperienced student, creates a situation where the cultural barrier is most evident—between the teacher's desk and a room of disinterested, hostile students.

Prof. Lettis is art instructor in the Colgate University-Camp Brace Summer Program.

All agree that exposure is desirable. Its nature is the issue. Conditions, by themselves, can create a barrier if the lines of demarcation are as clearly drawn as they are in a formal classroom. The degree of formality then needs our attention. Our experience during the past three summers involving pre-delinquent boys and graduate teaching interns suggests that "culture shock" can be lessened for future teachers by casual, informal contact between the two groups.

Informal Contact Bridges the Gap

The program encourages these informal meetings: i.e., a Negro boy from Bedford-Stuyvesant and a graduate student recently graduated from Brown, while they walk across campus or shoot a game of pool. The setting is informal and the conversation casual, ranging from how to sniff glue to the problems of staying in school. How could such contacts, personal and relaxed, have any educational value? Because both parties understand the ground rules established at the outset, which would enable each to benefit from the ideas of the other. One reason for the boys' presence on campus was to act as consultants, experts on the problems of the slum child, the dropout, and the alienated. Paul Lucier says in "Hey, Teacher's Not a Fink" (*Youth Service News*, 1966):

> "The key ingredient . . . is the degree of rapport which the interns are able to achieve with the boys. . . . The youths, acting in the role of "consultants on problem students" and speaking with their vivid, first-hand knowledge of the situation, can offer to the interns an insight which could only be hinted at in an academic classroom."

Though there is no specific format, these are some essential ingredients: frequent exposure; time for numerous contacts; informality; and honesty as to *why* and *how* the experience is to be conducted.

The primary purposes are to establish communication and to assess differences in culture and value. Successfully accomplished, this experience makes the future teacher more sensitive to the problems he will face.

Reject My Language — Reject My World

The means to communicate is equally important. Riessman and Albert emphasize this point in "Digging 'The Man's' Language" (*Saturday Review*, 17 September '66). The secondary language, of the street, becomes the primary language of the minority group. The solution has been to force the student to conform to the language of the middle class. Allowing the prospective teacher to learn and use this "other language" can overcome a significant barrier which separates the two cultures, avoiding the animosity that is inevitable when the disadvantaged is forced to reject part of his own world.

Assessment of the cultural differences is equally important. The young teacher may be aware that there are differences, but be totally ignorant of how wide a gulf exists. The relief check, matriarchal family structures, or distain for public authority are all "facts" that we know but *why* they are an accepted way of life is of greater significance. Data concerning these conditions are of limited value as a new teacher attempts to establish rapport with a class of eighth graders who prefer the street to the classroom. Knowledge to facilitate understanding must come from within the other culture. In order to understand other outlooks, one must know about them, not as theory, but as working knowledge. This can be gained through personal, informal contacts as those briefly described: contacts that afford individual assessment of cultural values and a means for understanding and penetrating the language barrier. Only by gaining workable insights can we hope to prepare future teachers for "culture shock."

CONCERN FOR ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOR

CULTURE SHOCK

Dr. Miriam E. Urdang

Probably the single most significant cause of failure among teachers of the disadvantaged has been that they have not experienced culture shock at the pre-service level. They have had little opportunity to learn to handle their personal feelings toward social groups other than their own. The large majority find themselves in the ghetto classroom on the first day of school to cope alone not only with the manifold anxieties common to the first actual teaching responsibility, but also with the emotional shock as stereotyped attitudes and internalized prejudices collide with groups of live children from another social class.

If the teacher is not equipped for this confrontation, the impact causes various stressful emotional reactions depending on the individual—fear, hate, anger, pity—which may take control of his behavior toward the children. The results are well known. If a teacher does not give up after the first day or week or year, having few facts and understandings to help him behave rationally, he may "adjust" by relying upon his emotions to guide his relationships with his pupils. To cite one example, his own fears or ignorances may tend to cause him to classify all disadvantaged children as a fixed entity and not as individuals. It is not uncommon to hear even the most experienced teacher remark categorically: " 'These' children do not want to learn." "You can't smile at 'these' children." " 'These' children are physical." It takes little conjecture to imagine the kinds of teacher behavior and consequent effects on children's learnings which can be influenced by these and similar attitudes.

The recommendation here is that as many as possible guided live experiences which require students to come to grips at the pre-service stage with their personal feelings toward disadvantaged groups be incorporated into the existing programs of teacher education.

Many things along this line have been tried and all seem to support this call for concerted comprehensive efforts throughout the total preparation period. Experimental programs carried out at Queens College during the past few years and at present have given attention with some success to helping students begin to reduce the anxieties of culture shock.

Three Queens College Programs Move Into the Community

The Harlem Student Teaching Program, for instance, required student teaching in the ghetto, gave more intensive supervision and included community experiences through two day bus or walking tours of neighborhoods. Scheduled stops were made at churches, stores, hospitals, welfare agencies, civil rights organizations where students talked to leaders in charge about their work in attacking problems.

At the School University Teacher Education Center (SUTEC) Public School #76, Queens, school and college cooperate to provide a school setting where all phases of pre-service preparation take place including college courses. Students explore and study the community and survey places important for school children to visit. Special lectures on the community by the sociologist from the SUTEC Inquiry-Research staff are followed by bus trips through the district under the direction of the anthropologist. Students collect basic census data on school children and their families; they go to homes personally to invite parents to attend meetings at the school.

The Queens College program of the National Teacher Corps, uses community orientation extensively with emphasis on services of the intern in the community. Corps members receive pre-service and in-service preparation in the disadvantaged schools. Counselling is provided to help students work through their feelings.

Valuable as special programs are in providing guidelines for preparing more effective teachers of the disadvantaged, they usually reach only a limited few for a limited time and in themselves cannot nearly meet the terms of this recommendation.

Guidelines for Change

The following guidelines for beginning to attack culture shock derive from the experiences of the Education Department at Queens College in the ongoing program as well as in the special projects:

Culture shock must be recognized as a major cause of failure among teachers of the disadvantaged. It prevents some from accepting teaching assignments, others from staying on the job and many others from success in guiding children's learning.

Everyone engaged in the preparation of teachers should look at his own attitudes to see that he is not susceptible to culture shock.

Required student teaching with disadvantaged children is essential. If a student can encounter culture shock and begin to work through his feelings in a situation similar to the first job situation, anxieties can be reduced substantially.

More intensive, personal supervision is advisable to give help and support during the culture shock experience.

Psychological counselling should be available to help students in expressing their feelings more freely than is possible in the presence of the supervisor who also evaluates performance.

It is essential that community experiences be provided in the pre-service period.

Modification of existing course procedures might include field work, laboratory experiences or projects requiring contact with disadvantaged children on a one-to-one or on a group basis. This applies not only to education courses but courses in anthropology and sociology as well.

Evaluation procedures to measure the efficiency of efforts at counteracting culture shock need to be built into the pre-service program. Hopefully, there will come a time when selection criteria for teachers entering the profession will include relative freedom from culture shock.

Graduate programs of teacher education can continue by providing seminars, lectures, projects aimed at helping in-service teachers deal with their feeling about people from a social class other than their own.

Schools and colleges must cooperate in reducing culture shock among pre-service and in-service teachers.

Until the American school as a whole ceases to reflect the society as it is and begins to concentrate more on the goals of social integration and democratic pluralism, we in teacher education must take the initiative to find ways to keep culture shock in the middle class teacher from interfering with the learning opportunities of the disadvantaged child.

Dr. Urdang is Assistant Professor of Education and director of National Teacher Corps at CUNY Queens College.